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Email Outlining Roland F. McLaughlin's Military Career, May 23, 2000

Mike Hanlon

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Subject: Re: WWI soldier

Date: Tue, 23 May 2000 15:25:23 PDT

From: "Mike H." <medwardh@hotmail.com>

Status: Normal

Roland McLaughlin

Greetings Dorothy,

Your uncle was drafted and inducted into the Army in Calais, Maine on April 27, 1918. He was initially assigned to the 76th Division which was the National Army Division of draftees from New England. That Division was subdivided into Brigades. He was assigned at first to the 151st Infantry Brigade of the 76th Division. Subsequently he was assigned to the 304th Infantry Regiment, a sub-unit of the 151st Brigade. This was his unit when he shipped overseas.

Once in France, however, it was decided that the division would be broken up and used as replacements for divisions already seeing combat or short of manpower, but ready to fight. For some reason he was assigned for 5 days to another replacement division.

That is the reference to the 163rd Infantry which was part of the 41st Replacement Division. Finally, he was sent to the 58th Infantry of the 4th Division as a replacement and this is really the important references. It was with this outfit that he saw his action and was wounded.

On October 7th the Division was in the heart of the Argonne Forest NE of Verdun. I saw one reference that indicated the division was under continual fire from a ridge line to its right and were constantly forced to put their gas masks on. If your uncle was gassed this very often led to respiratory problems which could be further complicated by other wounds. Whatever the specifics, he was probably one of many casualties for the division during the period. It was a very tough fight going on.

On the rest, I can only conjecture. But he was shipped home before the rest of the division and so I would say it is likely he need specialized medical care he could not receive in France. Sadly, he did not recover. Your family apparently decided he should be buried locally instead of in a National Military Cemetery like Arlington.

On finding a photo of him, I would say that your best hope is that the training division published for lack of better word a yearbook of their experiences in training before they went overseas. {Some divisions did, but I don't know about the 76th Division}.

The best place to locate such a work would be in the college and large local library systems of New England.

Hope this helps. Feel free to write again with any questions.

Mike Hanlon, Website Editor